

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 are pending. Claims 1, 19, 25, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 77, 83, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 are amended. No new matter is introduced.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 56 was objected to for an informality. In addition, Claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (a) as anticipated by McFadden (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0126137).

The outstanding Office Action objected to Claims 56 for a potential informality. Amended Claims 56 addresses the informality as suggested in the Office Action. In view of this amendment, it is respectfully requested that the objection to Claim 56 be withdrawn.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1-7, 19-21, 25-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, 112, and 124 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (a) as anticipated by McFadden be withdrawn.

Independent Claim 1 relates to a merge information providing apparatus. Amended independent Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items;

means for receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

means for acquiring only designated user information items regarding said designated user from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means in response to said acquisition request, said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups; and

means for merging said acquired designated user information items from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item... (Emphasis added.)

These amendments are fully supported by the disclosure as originally filed. For example, and not intended to be construed as limiting thereto, Figure 8 of the present application and page 42, line 22 to page 45, line 11 describe a merge provider that can acquire the user information of a user and/or the group information of the group to which the user belongs and registered to a sub provider other than the sub provider of which use is certified. In the example of Figure 8 of the present application, the sub provider may be any of the WindowsTM authentication directory provider 7, a Local authentication directory provider 12, or a NotesTM authentication directory provider 8. Thus, as can be seen in Figure 8, and the accompanying description, the certification directory providers each respectively holds *mutually different user data*. That is to say, the user information items in the certification providers 7, 12, and 8 *are different between each of* certification providers 7, 12, and 8.

By contrast, McFadden describes hub and spoke computer system in which the user data is *identical* between the hub computer and each of the spoke computers as the result of

synchronization. Indeed, the entire purpose of the structure of the system described in McFadden is to keep the user information identical because, as McFadden notes, “[t]he burden on administrators just in keeping groups current can be significant, and can result in substantial expenditures of time and resources within an organization, if not be entirely prohibitive for some organizations.”¹ As illustrated in Figure 1 of McFadden, a dynamic group management system (12) includes synchronizer programs (50, 52) on hub and spoke computers (14, 16).² As described at paragraph [0045] of McFadden, the synchronizer programs *maintains synchronization* between the respective user and group records on hub and spoke computers, as well as updating group memberships to reflect changes made to the user records in the user databases. McFadden describes (emphasis added) “synchronizer program(s) perform a number of useful functions, including *maintaining synchronization* between the respective user and group records on hub and spoke computers, as well as updating group memberships to reflect changes made to the user records in the user databases. The synchronizer program(s) may be configured to perform various tasks on a periodic basis, or may be configured to perform certain tasks in response to certain events. For example, an update to a dynamic group may be triggered by an addition or deletion of a user record in a user database.”³ Thus, McFadden describes synchronizing *all user information* on hub and spoke computers (14, 16) such that the user data will be *identical* between each of the spoke computers, and does not disclose or suggest a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, in which the

¹ See McFadden, at paragraph [0010].

² See McFadden, at paragraph [0045].

³ See McFadden, at paragraph [0045], emphasis added.

user information items *are different between each of the means for providing the plurality of user information items*, as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Amended Claim 1 further recites:

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

These amendments are also fully supported by the disclosure as originally filed. For example, and not intended to be construed as limiting thereto, Figure 8 of the present application illustrates certification directory providers 7, 8, and 12 that are connected to the Internet (in this example, a Web browser 1) via a common merge provider 13 and a common Web portal 2.

Turning once again to McFadden, the spoke computers 16 are each individually connected to the internet as well as to the hub computer, and do not include the intermediate communication between the claimed means for acquiring and means for merging, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Accordingly, McFadden fails to disclose or suggest all of the features of amended independent Claim 1. It is submitted that amended independent Claim 1 and Claims 3-7 depending therefrom are in condition for allowance.

Although differing in scope, amended Claims 19, 25, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 77, 83, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 each recite similar features to those

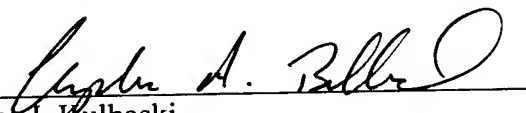
discussed above with respect to independent Claim 1. Accordingly, it is submitted Claims 19, 25, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 77, 83, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121, and the claims depending therefrom, are in condition for allowance.

For the reasons discussed above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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